

contemporaries of Christ. Some of them may have been present at Jerusalem at Pentecost. The witness of this epistle is therefore as strong as possible, because it portrays undesignedly the character of early Christianity and the faith of early Christians.

When we consider the character of the writer as revealed between the lines, and the character of those to whom he wrote, a typical group of believers, who can doubt that what is here taught contains the very fundamentals of our faith? If we deny these teachings, we cannot honestly call ourselves Christians. The issue of our investigation is therefore to ascertain whether this earliest New Testament document contains teaching which many now are prepared to deny because they believe it was all of later growth and development. If, for example, the deification of Christ was due to St. John's Gospel and to St. Paul's later teaching, and the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels is human only, how do we account for the fact that such an epistle as the one before us, after emphasizing the unity of God, gives such strong proof for the deity of Christ and is addressed without any apology for such teaching to a group of Jewish and Gentile believers?

Regarding the writer, we learn from the epistle itself that he had the authority of an apostle (2: 6); that he was associated with Silvanus and Timothy (1: 1; 3: 2); that he was entrusted with a message called the Gospel (1: 5; 2: 4), which he boldly proclaimed (2: 2). The writer had traveled